RESTORATION REVIEW

Seek the truth --
come whence it may,
cost what it will.

{an Episcopal seminary motto}

In This Issue:

Catholics Criticize Campbellites
Instrumental Music: Faith or Opinion?
"I Would Cry with Her"

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What the Old Testament Means to Us. . No.8

SOME PROMISES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

> *Jesus Christ has become a servant to confirm the promises made to the fathers.*— Ro.15:8

I have cautiously called this installment "Some of the promises . . . ," for obviously one could hardly deal with all the promises of the Old Testament. In being highly selective, therefore, I will choose those promises that the apostle Paul might have had in mind when he wrote the above passage, referring to "the promises made to our fathers," and when in the same chapter he said, "Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

It is noteworthy that Paul found hope in what we call the Old Testament, but which to him was the holy Scriptures. Hope has to do with promises made. The apostle saw the promises of the OT fulfilled in Jesus Christ. That was in fact, according to Paul, the reason for Christ to come into the world as a servant, "to confirm the promises made to the fathers."

The thesis that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the OT promises runs all through the New Testament. Acts 3:24 says it well: "Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also told of these days," as does Lk. 24:27: "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." It is evident that our Lord saw his own life as fulfillment of the OT, for he would refer to the Scriptures as "they that testify of Me" (Jn. 5:39). As Jesus turned toward the Cross he understood that some of the details of his passion were to fulfill the OT, as in Mt. 26:54 when he told Peter not to defend him with a sword: "How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus? " When he began his ministry in his home church he read from the OT and said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21).

To the writers of the NT it is not claiming too much to say that they saw the NT as the fulfillment of the OT, or to put it another way, all the promises in the OT could be added up as "the one promise," and that was Jesus Christ. Paul, for instance, in laying out the facts of the gospel as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ says again and again that it was "according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4). In the preaching of the gospel, as Philip to the Eunuch, the point of reference was Christ in the OT (Acts 8:35). The most

Biblical book in the Bible is Revelation, for it has scores and scores of references to the ~T. Being a book of promises, it is rooted in the OT.

But this does not mean that the OT writers themselves had any such idea that they were preparing a kind of preamble to a Christian Bible. There was of course a Messianic consciousness on the part of some, but overall they were speaking for God in their own time and situation. To put it another way, to the NT writers the OT writers were foretellers, but the OT writers saw themselves as forth tellers. They were writing (or speaking) not so much in reference to the future but in response to the problems of God's covenant people in their own age, such as their unfaithfulness to God in such terms as idolatry and social injustices. Much of the OT is speaking, *for* God, calling upon the people to repent and return to God.

In such a context there are promises given to Israel that are independent of any Christian interpretation in the NT. If for the moment we lay the NT aside and ask what the OT says to its own people in terms of hope we could at least list the following promises.

1. *The faithfulness of God.*

The promise that God will always be faithful to His covenant people runs throughout the OT. Typical of such a promise is in 2 Sam. 7 where God's providential care of Israel is recounted. He brought them out of the land of Israel (v. 6). He led them in their wanderings and protected them from their enemies (v. 9). He will give them a land of their own from which they will not be uprooted (v. 10). He placed judges over them (v. 11). He will preserve their seed and give them a kingdom (v. 12). He will be to them a Father and they will be to him a son (v. 14). He will chasten them for their sin but His mercy will never depart from them (v. 15). The people may be unfaithful, but God is always faithful.

When Karl Barth, the great Christian theologian, exulted in the promise *God is for us!* he was recalling a truth that has its roots in the OT. Ps. 118:6 says it this way, "The Lord is on my side. I will not fear. What can man do to me?" This promise is "boldly" referred to in the NT, as is that beautiful promise in Josh. 1:5, "I will never leave you or forsake you," which is another way of underscoring God's faithfulness (Hb. 13:5-6).

As Christians we sing that grand old hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" in which there is that moving line, "Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!" It doesn't read "All I have *wanted. . . ,*" but all I have needed. What is remarkable about that hymn is that the faithful OT saint could sing it as well as a Christian, every line of it. The hymn is in fact drawn from an OT passage (Lam. 3:23).

2. *Salvation by grace and mercy.*

It is a mistake to conclude that we find grace and mercy in the Bible only when we come to the NT., for the God of the OT is as gracious and merciful as He is faithful. One is not saved by works of the law in the OT anymore than in the NT. One hardly finds more spiritual truth than in Dt. 10:16: “Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer,” or in Ps. 51:16-17: “For you do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and contrite heart.” While Judaism has not placed emphasis upon faith as Christians have, it has always held that salvation is God’s doing, his “pure grace,” as one rabbi puts it, and not by keeping Torah. Early on, as in Ex. 34:6, God is described as merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abounding in mercy and truth, and throughout the Psalms it is evident that God “blots out iniquities” (Ps. 51:9) and that it is because of His grace and mercy (Ps. 103:4).

3. *Dawning kingdom.*

The promise of the kingdom of God, on earth as well as in heaven, is found first in the OT. And it is properly described as dawning, for it seems to be always both present and future, both earthly and heavenly, both temporal and spiritual. If it is here to some degree, it is always coming, sometimes imminent. A reality but never fully realized. Always a blessed promise, related to peace, joy, glory, victory, dominion, power. Our Lord’s prayer, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,” was the prayer of a faithful Jew schooled in the OT, a prayer any good Jew could have prayed. Jesus was on familiar ground when he began preaching among his fellow Jews, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” But it is only occasionally that the OT, like the NT, points to God’s coming kingdom in glorious and transcendent terms, as in Dan. 2:18: “But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.”

4. *The Holy Spirit will make new creatures with new hearts.*

The OT as well as the NT promises inward renewal. Every good Jew could pray with David, “Create in me a clean heart, a God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take your Holy Spirit from me.” It would be difficult to find a passage in all the Bible that promises more than this one: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” (Ez. 36:26-28). In these passages it is evident that the Holy Spirit was at work in the OT.

5. *The land and the people.*

One cannot help but be impressed with how the OT consistently couples the promised land (Canaan, now Palestine) with the promised people. At the outset God not only promised Abraham a posterity that became God's own covenant people, but He promised the people "the land." In Scripture the people and the land are virtually inseparable. It begins with a covenant God made with Abraham: "The Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I will give this land" (Gen. 15:18). It continues in a mandate to Moses: "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Command the children of Israel, and say to them; When you come into the land of Canaan, this is the land that shall fall to you as an inheritance'" (Nu. 34:1-2). When at last the people reached the land but were reluctant to enter it, Moses said to them, "Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged" (Dt. 1:21).

Once the people had occupied the land only to be uprooted and taken into captivity because of their sins, it was the theme of the prophets that God would be faithful to His promise and restore them to the land, as in Jer. 24:6: "I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up." And Amos 9:15: "I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them, says the Lord." The position of the OT is that God owned the land and He gave it to His special people (Dt. 2:29). Thus the idea of "Divine right" emerged, the basis for modem Zionism.

Unlike the other promises we have listed, the land promise has been obscured by confusion and disagreement, by Jews as well as Christians. This is because "real estate theology" is sticky and subject to abuse. Some premillennialists, who rank first among Christians in support of Zionism, insist that Israel will have "the land" with or without the help of any nation on earth, for God has ordained it, and it will be! Their insistence is sometimes without ethical consideration, for if Israel must wrest the land from the Palestinians by force as their forebears did the ancient Canaanites, so be it, for God wills it! In 1977 fifteen theologians and church leaders ran a full-page ad in The New York Times titled "Evangelicals Concerned for Israel." In the ad they referred to "Israel's divine right to the land." They made no reference as to what was to be done with the Arabs who have made Palestine their home for over a thousand years.

Other Christians have gone to the other extreme, some even denying that there is any longer any definable "Jews," that they have been amalgamated with other cultures and have lost their identity as a separate people. Other Christians argue more theologically, that the church has replaced ancient Israel and the "new covenant" has replaced the "old covenant," and therefore Israel no longer has a covenantal relationship with God and that the State of Israel has no theological legitimacy. Israel may exist as a secular state but not

as part of a divine plan. It is probable that many readers of this journal hold this view. They are not necessarily anti-Semitic, but they believe that all geopolitical promises in the OT have been either fulfilled or canceled. If the Jews have any "special" relationship with God it must be in reference to Jesus Christ, the true Messiah that they have thus far rejected.

There are even many Jews that have a problem accepting modern Israel as theologically legitimate, mainly because it came into existence, not by way of a spiritual renaissance on the part of Israel, but by forces that were mostly secular, political, and naturalistic. It is even accused of being mostly an atheistic state. Many within the Hasidic community in Israel, the most religious in the land, see Israel as one more secular state with little or no interest in a coming Messiah or things spiritual. For this reason they will not serve in the Israeli army.

If there is a middle ground between these opposing views, I think this is where the church should be. In the light of the NT, especially Rom. 9-11, we must allow that Israel does indeed have a future in God's plan, even if we have difficulty determining precisely what that is. And our heritage as Christians is so rooted in the OT and Judaism that we can be indifferent neither to the Jews as a people nor to "the land" that is inextricably tied to that heritage. After all, Palestine is Abraham's land and we are his spiritual heirs, and it is the land to which our Lord came from heaven to live and to die for us all. It is therefore very special, more than any other part of the world. News events about Israel should gain our closest attention, for it is our land too.

The land promise, which we are to take seriously, must be seen not only in reference to God's faithfulness but to His demand for justice and peace among nations. And as Christians we view all the OT in reference to Jesus Christ and the NT, which will assure us, if the OT does not, that God is no respecter of persons. We must conclude, therefore, that God loves the Palestinians as well as the Jews, and that He wants justice for both. That does not mean that "the land" promise does not relate to Israel in a special way, but does it have to mean that the Palestinians must be uprooted from their homeland?

If a "two-nation" solution cannot now be accepted as a fulfillment of the land promise, which presently appears to be the only fair option, perhaps it one day can be. We should be more concerned for peace, justice, and equity than for what we suppose "fulfills prophecy." We don't have to be pro-Israel and anti-Arab anymore than anti-Israel and pro-Arab. Our concern both as Christians and Americans must be liberty and justice for all.

That old hymn about God's faithfulness, referred to above, also has a phrase that says "strength for today, hope for tomorrow." That is what we want for all peoples of the world. Believing in God's faithfulness will make it so. That should be our worldview, our international view, our Israeli-Palestinian view.—*the Editor*

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CATHOLICS CRITICIZE CAMPBELLITES

These days we do not think of Roman Catholics being apologetical (in the sense of defending their faith) or evangelistical (in the sense of seeking to win others to their faith). It seems out of character for them to be taking on Protestants and defending such things as the papacy, the place of tradition, and the authority of the church. As rare as this might be, there is an instance of this in a Roman Catholic publication called *This Rock*, emanating from San Diego. It is lay-run but has priestly chaplains.

It takes on all Protestantism in a friendly, scholarly manner, but has a special penchant for bashing Mormons. They even had a written debate with one Mormon until he checked out, explaining that his bishop advised against it. As for the Mormon claim to be concerned for the poor, the Roman Catholic apologist observed that Mormons are not known to reach out to non-Mormons, and asked, "Where is your Mormon Mother Teresa?" They point out that the Mormons can't stand the slightest criticism of their doctrine.

The journal challenges basic Protestant tenets, such as justification by faith only. In one issue of the journal they argued with some persuasion that Luther understood neither justification nor faith. What is surprising is how often they rely upon Scripture, such as taking Luther to task on what the Bible actually says about faith. I find myself agreeing with them more than I disagree.

Even when they took on the Campbellites I had to concede that they were as much right as they were wrong. In a piece on "Campbell's Soupy Theology," in which they said next to nothing about his theology, they gave a brief summary of Campbell's life and contributions, describing him as "a man of intellect and accomplishment." They challenged his view of *sola scriptura* (Scriptures only as authoritative), which is of course generally Protestant, noting that the Bible never claims that it alone is the depository of all truth. I am not sure that Campbell believed that, for he insisted that there is a "*consensus fidelium*" in the church that must be looked to in determining the meaning of Scripture.

I doubt if we should claim “the Bible alone” is authoritative. If we do, we are in immediate trouble in determining the true books that make up the Bible since many books vied for a place in the canon. If it was the church that determined the canon, which is a fact of history, then some authority has to be given to the church.

The journal saw Campbell as successful in that his movement began with a handful and soon numbered hundreds of thousands, but as a failure in that he intended to unite the churches but only added new divisions of his own, pointing to the three denominations that resulted, the Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, and Churches of Christ.

Since *The Rock* invites friendly confrontation, I wrote a response to their Campbell piece. ‘I thought you might be interested in what I had to say. Here is my letter to the Roman Catholic journal:

> Dear Editor:
>
> As a member of the Church of Christ and as a student of the writings of Alexander Campbell I would like to make a friendly response to Mark Wheeler’s “Campbell’s Soupy Theology” in *This Rock*, August 1991.
>
> Oddly enough, Mr, Wheeler does not follow through on the title of the article in that he says little if anything about Campbell’s theology. He does correctly refer to his desire to unify the divided church of his day, and adds, “Campbellism failed to reunite even Protestantism, and it ended up contributed *(Sic)* new divisions of its own.
>
> This is unfortunately the case, for there are now three denominations resulting from the Campbell movement, as Wheeler notes. But does it follow that Campbell’s theology was therefore “Soupy” or his vision of “uniting the Christians in all the sects” was therefore wrong? It could be that he was a man ahead of his time, whose idea had not yet come. He may have been right even though he failed. Mr. Wheeler does not seem to realize that it was never Campbell’s intention to start another denomination. He was very reluctant to leave first the Presbyterians, the church of his youth, and later the Baptists, insisting that he would remain with them so long as he could freely teach. He always claimed he was forced out.
>
> Interestingly enough, Campbell always claimed to be catholic and based his plea for unity on catholic principles—not Roman or Greek Catholic, but catholic in the sense of “the one, holy, apostolic, and catholic church.” He was

> persuaded that all Christians can unite on the things they hold in common. He had a way of saying to his detractors, “You can’t make a sect of us because we are catholics.” Not exactly “Soupy” I would say.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Leroy Garrett
>
> P.S. I take the liberty to enclose an essay I did on Campbell in case you might be interested, and you might pass it along to Mr. Wheeler in appreciation of his interest in Campbell.

The letter could have included the fact that Campbell’s movement did not divide while he yet lived, and he insisted that it would never divide so long as the principles he had laid down were adhered to. The sum of those principles was that believers can unite only upon the essentials of the Christian faith—the facts of the gospel that are clearly and distinctly set forth in Scripture—and. that they are to allow liberty of opinion in all subordinate matters. Campbell thus distinguished between matters of *the* faith (where unity is required) and matters of faith (scruples or opinions where liberty is extended). Campbell was adamant in affirming that Christians can never unite upon opinions, and that unity is not a matter of doctrinal conformity. We unite by believing in and obeying Jesus Christ as Lord!

We eventually became a divided people when we departed from this plea of “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, love.” We never rejected the validity of the motto, but we ceased practicing it, including the latter part, for we quit loving each other and started debating one another and drawing lines of fellowship. It is to our shame that we did not divide over essentials but over methods, procedures, opinions.

This reference in a Roman Catholic source, which is innocuous enough, helps us to see ourselves as others see us—a divided unity movement, which is an oxymoron. Divided unitists! The truth is that for the most part we are no longer a unity people or a unity movement. We have settled in as three more denominations that are quite content to do their own thing and to forget their heritage as a unity people.

The good news in all this in that there is a revival of interest among our people in the noble dream of our pioneers of a united church. We are reading more about unity, thinking more about unity, praying more about unity. We yet have far to go if we once more become a unity people, but enough is happening to assure us that it is not an empty dream.

We may one day take up where Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell left off and once more plead for the unity of all believers in Jesus Christ alone.—*the Editor.*

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Instrumental Music: Faith or Opinion?. . .

WHAT MUST THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DO TO BE SAVED? (8)

(For this installment on what we in Churches of Christ must do to be saved I want you to read someone else, Bob Shaw, a preacher among us who changed his mind about some things after 25 years. While his subject is instrumental music, a question we are going to have to face with more boldness if we are to be saved, it is the spirit of freedom with which he writes and the change he has made in attitude that is especially impressive. It is his courage to think and to question tradition that points to what the Churches of Christ most need if we are to have a viable witness in our kind of world. If we could learn but one thing from his experience it would be wonderfully liberating: that the Bible does *not* make it clear that instrumental music is a sin. You will notice that he is not asking us to adopt instrumental music, but to cease being sectarian about it. Bob is minister to the non-instrumental Church of Christ in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada.—*the Editor*)

I spent the first 25 years or so of my life fighting against instrumental music in worship, believing it to be a matter of faith. Since I saw it as a matter of doctrine, I had no qualms for feeling justified in condemning to hell all who used it. During the last 10 years I have become convinced that instrumental music is a matter of opinion. To some this will make me a “liberal” who is not standing up for the truth. But I have the right to change my mind, and I want to tell you why I changed my mind. It was an honest and open look at our “position” and a diligent search of the Scriptures. Here are some of the things I found:

1. I came to see that all references to singing that we use to defend our position were addressed to the individual Christian and not the assembled church. This means that to be consistent we would have to say that instrumental music would be as wrong at home as at church, a position we do not generally take.

2. I came to question if I could really believe that millions of people will be condemned to hell for violating a law that is not even found in the books. Can you imagine being arrested, tried, and convicted for breaking a law that does not even exist? And we have to admit that there is no law prohibiting instruments in worship. Is not God a just God?

3. I was forced to conclude that if instrumental music is the sin that we have made it then surely God would have made it clear. It would have required just one more line in the Bible. Does not God make matters of salvation clear?

4. I had to face the fact that while we read the Psalms in our assemblies we skip those that call for the use of instruments in praising God. It is as if these psalms were surgically removed from the Bible! Do these psalms call upon people to do that which is sinful?

5. I had to admit to myself that there are good, honest, and knowledgeable Christians who do not see this issue the way we do. Such ones respect the authority of the Bible as much as we do.

6. I was made to see the fallacy of our position by one event in particular. In an open forum at Freed-Hardeman University one of our better known preachers, Guy N. Woods, was asked if it was all right to have an instrument brought into a church building for a wedding. His answer began with: “Since the Bible clearly teaches that instrumental music in worship is sinful. . .” He went on to advise against it since people might think we approved of it in worship.

I must say honestly and sincerely that the Bible *does not* clearly teach that instrumental music in worship is sinful! That is only our deduction and inference. It does in fact clearly teach that instrumental music is fitting and good and pleasing to God (Ps. 92, 147, 150, etc.).

7. I was further disarmed by the promise that God is going to hand me a harp with which to praise him in heaven (Rev. 15:1-3). If God accepted and even commanded instruments in the Old Testament, condemns them in the New Testament, and then approved of them again for heavenly worship, we must have a vacillating God, which is an unacceptable conclusion. Nor can I conceive of a merciful, loving God giving me an instrument in heaven after condemning millions of others for using them.

8. I came to realize that the basic problem in all this is distinguishing between matters of faith and matters of opinion. The same argument that condemns instrumental music condemns Sunday schools, vacation Bible schools, multiple cups for the Lord’s Supper, four-part harmony, and on and on. Until we realize that these are opinions over which we can agree to differ, we will continue to divide.

My purpose in saying these things is not to impose my conclusions on you. They are my own opinion. I do not want to bind them upon your conscience or make them a test of fellowship. We must not allow opinions to drive a wedge between us.

If all of us in a congregation agreed that it would be helpful to our worship to have instruments, I might be in favor of it. Even though I see instrumental music as a matter of opinion, I might still oppose adopting it, even if it did not violate my conscience. It might be lawful but not expedient.

I would not favor going headlong in adopting instrumental music in a Church of Christ, not in our generation at least. It is right for us to sing a cappella as a matter of personal conviction. It also preserves unity among us. It is our attitude that we must change. Our neighbors resent our unloving, unaccepting, and condemnatory attitude toward those who differ with us, even when they envy our ability to sing. We must come to see a cappella singing as our tradition, the method that is better for us, and not a matter of faith and salvation for everyone else. Unless we do honest, truth-seeking, unity-minded brothers and sisters will continue to leave us.

Why can't we practice what we've been preaching all these years? We've always said we speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent, but do we practice it? Let's be the generation that puts our derailed unity movement back on track. Let's be more patient and forbearing. Let's become a people that is known for the way we love one another, and let God be the judge of His own people.

Finally, let us revive the old motto and live by it: "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; in all things, love."*—867 14th St. NE, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada. T1A5W5*

THURSDAY IS THE LORD'S DAY TOO!

Cecil Hook

Although the first day of the week became a special day for assemblies in the early churches, it was not in response to a command or a binding example. Our inclination toward legalism has led us to try to bind it as a special day to be given to God. We have demanded certain activities on that day and limited their practice to it. This conviction is based upon supposed inferences.

In pre-Christian times in the Roman Empire, *kuriakos*, (the lord's) signified *imperial* or *belonging to the lord*, the emperor. As the empire became Christian, it is not surprising that they would modify *belonging to the lord* to relate to Christ as a part of their protest against Caesar-worship.

As time went by, many of the rules of the Sabbath were transferred to the first day of the week, but this was rejected in the Reformation by Luther and Calvin. Calvin even proposed to adopt Thursday in the place of Sunday. (See International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, p. 1919-20)

May we rightly consider Thursday as the Lord's day? Yes, Thursday is the Lord's day!

At the end of the persecutions in 325 A.D., because the first day of the week was so special to the Christians, Constantine, the Emperor, made it a holiday (holy day) throughout the empire. That accommodation has greatly influenced the Western world and has been a blessing to the disciples through succeeding centuries. The wide acceptance of that holiday has given it a respected authenticity. As with other accepted practices, efforts to authenticate it by the Scriptures came after the fact through scholasticism. The term "Lord's day" is used only once in the Scriptures (Rev. 1:10), and in that instance it was not referring to the first day of the week but to an epoch.

There are two questions that we must ask and answer. First, do the Scriptures demand that the first day of the week be a sanctified day for disciples? Second, was the first day referred to in the Scriptures as the Lord's day?

The first day of the week is mentioned in inspired church history only twice. That point should arouse enough suspicion about its sanctity to cause us to reexamine the matter. When Paul made his way to Troas, the disciples had a gathering and a meal with their honored guest (Acts 20). There is nothing to indicate that this was more than a special meeting or that it was, or became, a regular practice. It is recorded that they met to break bread. "*To* break bread" is translated from a Hebrew idiom which means "to partake of food" as in the eating of a meal. There is nothing that would indicate that this meal was the communion. An uncertain premise destroys the validity of any conclusion based upon it.

The other mention, 1 Cor. 16:1f., does not relate either to a ritual or to an assembling of disciples on that day.

Since no law concerning a certain day is given in the New Testament Scriptures, it is only by specious logic that men try to make an ordinance of it. Such is an effort to define laws so that we may be justified by keeping them.

Not only were the apostles silent about obliging us to keep certain days, they actually warned us about observing days. "You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years! I am afraid I have labored over you in vain" (Gal. 4:10). Read the entire context of "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard

to a festival ora new moon ora Sabbath" (Col. 2:16). Paul did not add, "Except for the Lord's day which is the first day of the week."

True apostolic teaching puts keeping of days and the eating of foods in the realm of indifference along with circumcision. Paul permits the weak brother to respect days but not to bind his scruple on others or condemn those who do not hold his conviction. He writes:

"One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let every one be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:5f).

Paul does not permit either side of the day-keeping controversy to pass judgment on the other. It is the whole person, not certain days or hours, who is sanctified. Every day is raised to the highest plane making us no closer to God or more priestly at one time than another.

If the Lord's day is a specific day, then we would have to say it is the Sabbath because of Jesus' own claim, for he himself declared, "For the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath (Mt. 12:8).

There are numerous instances in the Bible where "the day of the Lord" is used to denote, not a specific day of the week, but his coming in judgment, wrath, vengeance, or retribution to offenders or in deliverance for his people. This term is translated into the possessive form in only one place in apostolic writings, making it "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10) rather than "the day of the Lord." They mean the same thing.

In the spirit, John the apostle was transported in vision into the future to see the things that would transpire in the epoch of "the Lord's day" or "the day of the Lord." This was not a day of the week, but it was the manifestation of the Lord against the Jewish nation who had rejected him, and it was the time of his vindication of his saints. This judgment was about to transpire—"what must soon take place"—indicating that Revelation was written before 70 A.D. John was seeing in vision what is referred to as "the Day drawing near" (Heb. 10:25).

If you have a problem with what I am saying, let me ask you a few questions. Is Sunday holy? Is one day spiritual and another secular? Are some obligations bound on one day but loosed on the next? Are some actions holy if performed on a certain day but profane if done on another?

Stephan Bilak, one of our missionaries in Eastern Europe, recently gave me a wallet calendar from the Ukraine. They number their days downward instead of across and have the seventh day in red instead of the first day. In the Ukraine would we sin in keeping the seventh day instead of the first day?

Our real problem is in binding the Lord's Supper to the first day of the week and limiting it to that day. Is the Supper sanctified or is the day? Our limiting it to Sunday only is without command, precedent, or inference. There is no clear example in Scripture of the Supper being observed on the first day of the week. In Acts 20:7 they met to break bread, but there is no certainty that it was the Supper rather than a common meal. Since it was, according to Roman time, after midnight when the bread was broken, it was done on Monday instead of Sunday. Moreover, in an indisputable example Jesus initiated the Supper on a Thursday.

In a sense all days (all time) are holy because our whole lives are dedicated to God. That sanctification is not segmented into days or time spans. It is not time that is sanctified, but the person who can say, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Anything that is holy can be profaned. Being holy, the Jewish Sabbath could be profaned by labor on that day. Can Sunday be violated by labor or travel? Since it is people who are holy and not days, how can their sanctity be violated? It is by sin, a breach of their holiness. But sin is not related to any time span. When we sin, we violate our holiness rather than that of a day. If missing a Sunday assembly is a sin, it is a lacking of sanctification rather than the profaning of a holy day.

Please understand that I am not disparaging the need for assembling with disciples, nor am I discouraging communion on Sunday. We all need the support we gain from sharing with those of like faith. I am saying, however, that what is done on Sunday is no more effective than if it were done on Thursday or any other day.

Man was not made for the Sabbath: so Jesus did not bind the keeping of that day at all costs as a legal obligation. The Sabbath was made for man, for God set apart a day to fill the need of man, not to work against his best interest by its inflexibility. In similar manner, assemblies are designed to meet the needs of disciples, but the day and hour of such gatherings is not specified as a law.

Again, the recognition of Sunday as a secular holiday in our society is a wonderful blessing. It makes it more convenient for us to assemble, and it gives social recognition to Christianity that the earliest disciples did not enjoy. To us who were brought up going to

assemblies each Sunday the day seems to have a special hallowed nature. But while Sunday is the Lord's day, it is neither a holy day nor The Lord's Day.

Looking back to Calvin's proposal—Is Thursday the Lord's Day? Yes! But so is Friday, Saturday, and all other days. Thursday, like Sunday, is the Lord's day but not The Lord's Day.—*1350 Huisache. New Braunfels. Tx. 78130*

> Religion can satisfy neither man nor God unless it satisfies the intelligence. Intelligence, motivated by its conclusion of faith, leads one to hunger and thirst for right emotionally. The desire to do what is right is a fundamental virtue without which one cannot be acceptable to God.—Cecil Hook in *Free as Sons*

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"I WOULD CRY WITH HER"

I want to tell you about one of my friends that I often visit in a nursing home here in Denton. Effie does not appear to be either old enough or feeble enough to be confined to a nursing home, but for whatever reason she is unable to negotiate life on "the outside." In calling on such folk I search out entrees for conversation, such as encouraging them to talk about their youthful years, their marriage, their children, their life's work, the people they remember. Recently when sitting with Effie, who has been in the home for awhile, I asked her a different kind of question.

"Effie," I asked, "there is this woman that has just been placed here in the home. She is terribly fearful of being in a nursing home, something she has always dreaded. She resisted it to the end, but her children insisted that she is no longer able to care for herself. She is sitting there in the lounge like a wayfarer that has lost her way, her first day here. You have been here a long while and you might be able to help her. You go in and sit down beside her. What would you say to her?"

Effie is more articulate than most, and sometimes she is philosophical. She seems to be in control, and if people are ever content in a nursing home I would suppose her to be one of them. What would she say to a distraught newcomer, one destined to live out her days in an institutional environment, never again preparing her own meals, never again keeping her own home, never again driving her own car. She settles in, waiting to die.

What do you say to one like that when the lights go out in her life? If anyone in the home had an answer it was Effie. She had been around and she knew how it was.

Did Effie ever lay one on me! She simply said, *I would cry with her.*

It wasn't only what she said but the way she said it. I took it as an unintentional rebuke. Yes, she *had* been around and she *did* know how it was, and that was the truth she was laying on me: *There are no speeches to make, no philosophizing to do, when the lights go out.* She was saying to me what I was supposed to know, that there is a time when one can only weep. She was also telling me that I did not know what I thought I knew: what it is like to be confined to a nursing home. It is no simple matter, not even for her, and no easy answers.

I told Effie that I had spent my life with well-educated, sophisticated people, and that I had spent years in the greatest universities in the world, but that I had never heard such elegant wisdom as expressed in her five-word sentence, *I would cry with her.*

I left Effie a wiser man, calling on other friends in the home. There is John, an invalid confined to bed, who has been telling me for years that he wants to die. I tell him that he can live for God even in a nursing home, but he stills says he wants to die. We say the Lord's prayer together, and I talk with him about the good old days when his wife was living (they had no children) and he worked his farm near Abilene, and taught a class of boys at the country church on Sundays. On this visit I reminded him that those boys in his old Sunday school class are now men out in the world on their own, and what he taught them all those years is now bearing fruit. "Isn't that great, John, the influence you had on them! You've been a blessing to the world," I said. But nothing comforts him like the thought of dying and going home, so we talk about that too.

John's roommate is a black man, also named John, a diabetic who has lost both legs and is blind. He lies in bed, never moving until someone helps him. He recognizes my voice and expects a visit. I sit with him, hold his hand and talk about the Lord we both love. He joins me in saying the Lord's prayer. I tell him that he will not be blind forever or an invalid forever, and that he will one day be whole again. He all but shouts, "Yes, Yes, Yes!"

David is another patient in the home who is not all that old, not quite 60 I would say, but he can't quite cut it "out there," so his sister, who is wife to a college professor and his guardian, placed him where he can be cared for. Life is tough for David. Smoking is his only refuge. He can have a cigarette only every half hour, and I see him shuffling his way to the smoking area at the appointed time. He tells me he can hardly wait for the next cigarette, looking at me helplessly, then at his watch. Ten minutes more to wait. He often

says to me, “Leroy, I can’t stand it in here.” I tell him he will be all right and ask him once more about Jaqueline, his boyhood sweetheart and the only woman in his life. He calls her Jackie and tells me how pretty she was and how one night he kissed her. She married someone else long years ago. I see marks of lost greatness in David. On his better days we talk of poets and philosophers, and he occasionally reads articles in this journal.

Brooks, now plagued with Alzheimer’s and in a wheel chair, once had the responsible position of secretary for the City of Denton. His wife has placed a notice on the wall of his room asking the staff to take her husband often to the sitting room where he can be with others. But he only sits and stares, saying nothing. On this day I reminded him once more of how he helped Denton to grow into a sizable city, and how he once took me to Ft. Worth to make a speech to a gathering of city officials. “Remember, Brooks?” No response, only a stare. I patted his hand and moved on

I have read to Chris, a 17-year old quadriplegic, through several books over several years, including two volumes of Lewis’ *Chronicles of Narnia.* which he seems to have no problem understanding. At age seven he was injured in an automobile accident that killed both of his parents. He is unable to talk and has almost no use of his arms and legs. But he has a good mind, goes to school, and works a computer by way of head movements. He has a cheerful disposition. We talk about everything, such as the great cities of the world that I have visited, and how people in other nations live. He responds only with yes or no, head movements, and sometimes he communicates on his computer, which pronounces words he summons up. I tell him there are two worlds, this one and the next, and it is the next we are preparing for, and in that world everything will be made right—no wheel chairs, no nursing homes, no broken bodies. He is gleeful when I assure him he will one day run and leap and praise God, if not in this world then in the next.

Then there is Flo who is as old as she is childlike, and who says to me over and over, “Please take me home.” She hugs my neck and kisses my cheek, over and over again, saying, “You take me home?” We talk about the simplest things, such as what she remembers about her mother. Sometimes I just sit with her and hold her hand.

Now and again through the years I miss a David or a John or a Flo and make inquiry, only to learn that they had died a few days before. Maybe they are the fortunate ones. The others just sit and stare, or vegetate in their beds and wheelchairs, or shuffle about aimlessly. The abler ones do a little reading, watch TV, and gather every half-hour and silently send up billows of smoke as if in sacrifice to a god. Some sit in the lounge and watch the front door for someone to come to see them, but no one ever comes. They all have something significant in common. They are all waiting to die. And with what manner of hope only God knows.

Back in my car on that visit I thought of the wisdom of my uneducated friend Effie. What would she say, one who has been around and knows how it is, to a new arrival at the home? She would cry with her. I decided that I was not all that far from what Effie was trying to say. That is what I had been doing with my friends, each in a different way. I was crying with them, even if mostly with dry eyes. Sometimes that is about all one can do in our sinful, troubled world. It was sometimes all that Jesus could do or did do.—*the Editor*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Ouida and I enjoyed visits to other churches of our heritage in our area in recent weeks. The Southlake Church of Christ, near the DFW airport, is a growing, dynamic congregation that is a good example of what the Church of Christ must do to be saved, Biblically rooted without being sectarian. We enjoy visiting there, not only because they are free and open, but also because we have a number of friends of long standing who are members there. We joined my sister in celebrating a Homecoming at her congregation, the Stevens Park Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas, which is my old home. The congregation, now almost 50 years old, is fighting for survival due to demographic shifts, but those that remain are quality people with a will not only for survival but for renewal. I appreciate the manner in which the Disciples celebrate the Lord's supper, which always includes the words of institution of our Lord. This is almost never done in either the Christian Churches (Independent) or Churches of Christ. But I notice in recent years Communion is often presided over by the minister rather than by the elders, a break from their tradition that might be questioned. It is reassuring to me that you can attend any church within the Stone-Campbell tradition, from far left to far right, and the Lord's supper will be served every Lord's day, open Communion, mind you. That is one important reason why I love the Movement and would never leave it, never!

This journal has now and again called attention to the fact that originally when our people were a united unity movement we called ourselves by three names, inter-changeably—Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, and Churches of Christ—and we were known by our neighbors by all three names. Needless to say that it is different today when we seem to know more about division than about unity. But a reader has sent us information about an old church in or near Sumner, Illinois that ties us to our past. The church has two front doors. Over one door it reads "Christian Church" and over the other

"Church of Christ." If a lot of folk I know in Texas should be visiting, I know what door they'd go through, if they went through either!

The Gateway Restorationist Unity Forum announces a program on "The Unity We Seek" to be held at St. Louis Christian College (1360 Grandview, Florissant, Mo. 63033) on October 12. The Forum is made up of persons from all three churches of the Movement, and its purpose is to provide opportunities for fellowship and dialogue for all three churches. There will be speakers from all three churches at the Oct. 12 gathering. For further information contact Larry Doggett at the college address. It is heartening that meetings of this sort are now frequent. I remember when they were non-existent and deemed impossible.

Worldwide there are one million students who attend college outside their native country. About 350,000 of these from 185 countries are in some college in the U.S.A. They stay from two to five years. Most of them are confined to a campus and never visit in an American home, even though they are curious about American life and culture. Some churches consider these people a "mission field" and reach out to them. They want them to go home with Christ in their lives and God's word in their hearts. One church here in Denton has 70 foreign students in its assembly from our universities. Churches of Christ are making a substantial effort to reach these students all across the country. If you live in a college town or near one, you might be surprised how many foreign students are enrolled. You can be a blessing by opening your home to lonely foreigners who are eager to be a part of American family life. If you want to know how to go about it write to Prof. Al Henderson, Sunset School of Preaching, 3723 34th St., Lubbock, Tx. 79410. I recently heard Al report on his work and was very impressed with its potential for good.

Sometimes readers ask me about worth-while projects that they might help support. One that I highly recommend is the International Bible Correspondence School, Box 98-L, Sta. L, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6E 4Y5. Richard Kruse has directed this school for 23 years with substantial success. His lessons, sent to people in Third World countries who want to study both English and the Bible, follow standards set by the British educational system and are monitored by his own staff. Missionaries in the field cooperate with his efforts, making contacts and sometimes baptizing his students. Richard has hung in all these years, and has been burdened by health problems within his family. His needs are acute just now since one of his supporting churches is soon to drop its support. You can write to him for more details. He runs a tight ship and keeps his supporters informed. It is one of the more effective programs among the Churches of Christ.

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READER'S EXCHANGE

What the Church of Christ Must Do

I will gladly confess my own participation (sometimes subtly, occasionally overtly) in perpetuating disunity and discord among God's elect—the very antithesis of that for which Jesus prayed in Jn. 17. I'm embarrassed and ashamed because of our exclusive hermeneutics that would edit one of our unity slogan to read, "We are the only Christians, not Christians only." It also pains me to realize that our unity movement is one of the most fractured of all such movements in the 150 years of its existence. Have we learned the lesson that our unity is in a Person and not in some movement or uninspired theological hermeneutics? Yes, I repent.—*Steven Clark Goad. Blythe Church of Christ, Blythe, Ca.*

My heart was thrilled when I read your "What Must the Church of Christ Do to be Saved?" in which you called for a "Proclamation of Repentance "to be circulated among the various institutions and congregations of the Churches of Christ. I would make one addition. I believe the same petition should be circulated and signed by the Disciples of Christ and Independent Christian Churches also. This we should all do with prayer and fasting, and perhaps our tears should be mingled with the ink. I'm ready to sign!—*Dean Melton. East Alton, Illinois*

Your essays on "What Must the Church of Christ Do to be Saved?" are right on! But if your solution is accepted won't that necessitate the death of "The Church of Christ',?—*Bill Gahr, Fenton. Mo.*

(Yes, "The Church of Christ" mentality would die as all sectarianism eventually will. It is in fact already dying. But the Church of Christ as an intelligent, spiritual, and responsible people working as part of the church catholic for the eventual unity and renewal of all God's people would be very much alive and making significant contributions.—*Editor*)

I heartily support the idea of a public confession of and repentance from our divisiveness in the Church of Christ. A proclamation such as the one you suggested surely would do a great deal toward healing old wounds caused by bad attitudes, and it would remove psychological and emotional barriers, clearing the way for God's message.—*Brian Casey, Newark, De.*

(We invite you to write and give us your reaction to the series on what the Church of Christ must do, pro or con.—*Editor)*

One of the many reasons I enjoy your articles is that they often reflect an appreciation and awareness of the wonders of the world we live in. This is not usually the case with what I read in other Christian Church/Church of Christ journals. C. S. Lewis would probably have enjoyed "A Universe of Hope" in your December 1990 number.—*Stephen Cobourn. Springfield. Illinois*

You and brother Ketcherside have done so much for the cause of unity. I believe God raised both of you up in our time. Thank you so much. So much change for the good has come due largely from the influence of your fine paper and Carl Ketcherside's Mission Messenger.—*Ed Shroyer, Pekin, Illinois*

Our preacher has been preaching on unity for several weeks. It is thrilling and refreshing to hear God's truth proclaimed as we have never heard it before from a Church of Christ pulpit. You can justly have a feeling of pride for having contributed to the progress of many of us who have learned that God's kingdom is wider than we ever dreamed.—*Dixie Vickrey, Dallas, Tx.*

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BOOK NOTES

We are restocking some of the old favorites by William Barclay, a longtime favorite of many of our readers. *And Jesus Said* is Barclay's study of the parables, $9.95 postpaid; *The Lord Is My Shepherd* is his study of selected psalms, $6.95 postpaid; *The Promise of the Spirit* deals with every passage in the NT on the Holy Spirit, $7.95 postpaid. A tiny but weighty book, his *Spiritual Autobiography*, is only $3.50 postpaid.

I suspect Carl Ketcherside's *Pilgrimage of Joy* will be out of print in two years or less. About half of those printed are already sold. You would be wise to order your copy if you plan to own one, a collector's item one day. $15.00 postpaid.

Our bound volume of this journal, under the title of *The Hope of the Believer*, is available at $15.00 postpaid. While they last, you can still get all seven of our bound volumes which cover all issues from 1977-1990, except for 1979-80, for $70.00 post-paid. These are handsome, matching volumes with dust jackets, introductions, and tables of content.

Everyone seems interested in the ministry of women in the church today, but everyone is not considering a crucial facet of the question, as does Evelyn and Frank Stagg in *Woman in the World of Jesus.* We will send you a copy for $12.95.

Wilbur Johnson's *Build My People* is well titled in that it is about God's power and God's people. It makes for excellent inspirational reading, and it is inexpensive for a 230-page book. $6.00 postpaid.

Olan Hicks has taken on all those who choose to defend a legalistic position on divorce and remarriage, whether on the polemic platform or in writing. And it is all in his book on that subject, *What The Bible Says About Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage,* which we will send you for $14.95 postpaid.

Since my own book on the Stone-Campbell movement is no longer in print, I recommend a shorter book but no less informative' *Captives of the Word* by Louis Cochran, which has the subtitle of "A Narrative History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Christian Church (Independent), and the Churches of Christ. " $13.95 post-paid.

We still stock the perennial favorites by K. C. Moser, *The Gist of Romans* and *The Way of Salvation.* Moser was among the first among Churches of Christ to rediscover the grace of God for our people. $6.50 each pp.

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